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PRODUCTION PLANNING
NIS Prog. 5-1
22 November 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director
Basic and Geographic Intelligence

SUBJECT: NIS Production Priority Planning

1. A meeting was held on 23 October by members of the ad hoc interagency group to initiate general discussion for the development of a new NIS Production Priority List. The meeting was called to solicit ideas from those who had not responded to [REDACTED] request for written views on priority scheduling.

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2. In discussing the detailed priority list (30 December 1966) developed by [REDACTED] it is apparent that almost all members are not in favor of utilizing this type of approach because it is too complex to work with and too many countries fall in the lower half of the 1 to 16 rating. Members in general agreed that any type of numerical listing of country/topic priorities was not practical for the NIS Program, which should concern itself principally with maintaining worldwide coverage of all countries so that when the basic information is needed it is available. Theoretically, if we continue to concentrate on maintaining such coverage with a vigorous maintenance program, our users will not be caught short if intelligence needs suddenly shift from one area of the world to another. Africa is a prime example of this, where great need was expressed one year and in the next not that much interest was apparent. Yet we were still geared to production on Africa. Rather, if any type of formal criteria were to be developed, it should be very generalized with all aspects considered as a group:

- a. What are our military interests?
- b. Is the country stable, in political or economic upheaval, ripe for subversion?
- c. Of what immediate interest in general is the country to the U. S. ?
- d. Does it pose a threat to the U. S. or its allies?
- e. What type of NIS coverage do we now have, how complete, how current?

3. These were items discussed in general at the meeting. What struck me most was the general lack of interest on the part of the members. And of course, the military representatives looked at the problem narrowly, and showed concern primarily about military needs. We must consider the fact that procedures now applied do follow priorities established within the producing agencies (at least DIA) in response to their needs and capabilities. Although this system appears haphazard from the point of central and formal control of scheduling, it has been working, and USIB has approved all production forecasts.

4. No time was set for the next meeting. Before another is scheduled though, some concrete suggestions will have to come forth from this Office because little can be hoped for in round-table discussions of the ad hoc group, primarily because of its composition. A list of general considerations to be applied to scheduling along the lines in paragraph 2 is a possibility. This is the general procedure now followed, but it is informal and applied by the producing office, not centrally within OBCI.

5. Another approach, which perhaps is a somewhat radical switch and may be impractical because of producer capability or could conflict with non-USIB production pattern which calls for a consistent annual rate of production, might be to align detailed section scheduling with that of the General Surveys. That is, establish six or seven relatively fixed topics discussed in the General Survey to be covered in supplemental detailed sections and produced in conjunction with the General Survey on a particular country. Production of the detailed sections within six months or so of the subject General Survey would be an optimum goal. Exception would have to be allowed for some of the lesser-developed countries where coverage beyond that in the General Survey would not be necessary. In those instances scheduling of detailed sections could be applied to other countries even if they were not on the General Survey schedule for that particular year. (This would give us the flexibility necessary for such a concept.) With General Surveys being on a 3 to 5 year maintenance cycle, the related detailed sections would also fall under this programmed (or, if you will, forced) maintenance procedure. Thirty Surveys are produced each year, and if seven related detailed sections were produced for each Survey that would total 210, which approximates our current detailed section production.

6. If coverage in many Surveys (depending upon the country) were slightly more extensive, I think this scheduling approach has definite possibilities. I mention more extensive coverage because many detailed sections now published are only three or four printed pages longer than related subsection coverage in the General Surveys. This is especially true on telecommunications, merchant marine, civil air, and power topics.

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